ERIC GARNER, 10 YEARS LATER – P6 • PALESTINIAN POETRY – P13

the indypendent
#288: JUNE/JULY 2021

ESTEBAN JIMENEZ

# COPAGANDA

## THE NYPD IS NOW PRODUCING, STARRING IN AND DISTRIBUTING ITS OWN MEDIA CREATIONS

BY JOHN TEUFEL — P8

the indypendent

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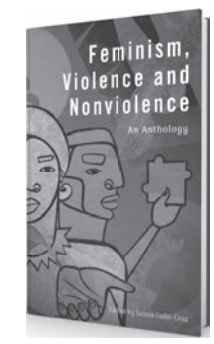

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JOHN TARLETON

# DSA vs. establishment stalemate continues

## In this year's Democratic primary, neither side could dislodge the other

By John Tarleton

Two hours after the polls closed and the election results showed him falling short in his bid to dislodge a machine incumbent in the heart of Central Brooklyn, Eon Huntley entered the backyard of a local bar to the whoops and shouts of more than a hundred of his DSA comrades.

"We came this close!" Huntley said. "This is the start of something. It's not the end of anything."

Huntley lost his race against incumbent Stefani Zinerman for Assembly District 56 in Bed-Stuy and parts of Crown Heights by 53-47 percent, a margin of about 500 voters. For the New York City chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America, it was a disappointing setback on a night that showcased both DSA's strengths and weaknesses as it continues to build a beachhead in New York State politics.

All eight DSA incumbent state legislators were re-elected, five went unchallenged and three others who did have opposition won with anywhere from 66 to 85% of the vote. For critics who expected last fall that the organization's fervent support for Palestine would be its demise, their hopes have been dashed.

In Western Queens, UAW union organizer Claire Valdez became DSA's ninth state legislator when she won by 59–32 percent over former City Council staffer Johanna Carmona in the 37th Assembly District, which encompasses Long Island City, Sunnyside, Ridgewood and parts of Maspeth and Woodside.

"Tonight we proved that a different kind of political vision is not only possible in Queens, it's a mandate," Valdez told supporters.

Valdez's victory continues DSA's run of success in their strongholds along an East River corridor that spans from Astoria in Western Queens to Greenpoint, Williamsburg and Bushwick in North Brooklyn to Sunset Park in South Brooklyn. In these areas, they now control four Assembly seats (Valdez, Zohran Mamdani, Emily Gallagher and Marcela Mitaynes), two State Senate seats (Kristen Gonzalez and Julia Salazar) and a pair of City Council seats (Tiffany Caban and Alexa Aviles).

However, DSA was not able to advance beyond these strongholds this year with Huntley's defeat and Jonathan Soto's loss to 10-term incumbent Michael Benedetto in a Northeast Bronx district centered around Co-op City.

In 2020, DSA shocked Brooklyn's Black political establishment when Jabari Brisport and Phara Souffrant Forrest rode the wave of energy from Black Lives Matter protests to defeat proteges of Congressman Hakeem Jeffries and claim a State Senate and Assembly seat respectively. Jeffries and his allies would not be caught napping again and have found deep wells of support from real-estate developers, billionaire charter school backers and pro-Israel groups who share the Democratic machine's desire to prevent more socialist advances. Since 2021, DSA has run three insurgent candidates in Flatbush, Crown Heights and Bed-Stuy respectively and lost by single digits each time as hundreds of thousands of dollars in attack ads flooded each district in the final weeks of the race. In Assembly District 56, Zinerman and her Super PAC backer spent upwards nearly $500,000 or more than was spent in all the previous elections in the district for the previous 20 years.

"We were not only up against the machine, but all the billionaires and millionaires," said Huntley, 39, a father of two who is a retail worker at a Manhattan department store.

In recent years, DSA's bloc of legislators have played key roles in passing the nation's most far-reaching Green New Deal legislation, in winning new tenant protections and securing emergency unemployment compensation for undocumented workers during the pandemic and in derailing Gov. Kathy Hochul's conservative pick to lead New York's highest court. They have also been outspoken in their support for Palestine and have sponsored legislation that would eliminate tax-exempt status for charities that funnel money to iIllegal settlements on the Occupied West Bank.

With the cost of housing soaring in a district that is almost 80 percent tenants, Huntley contrasted his support for more aggressive laws to protect with his opponent's support for landlord interests.

"This district deserves better. Nobody can pay the rent," said Cea Weaver, a longtime Brooklyn housing activist who took time off from her job to volunteer for Huntley in the final two weeks of the campaign. "We went to playgrounds, senior centers, NYCHA houses. When Eon talks to voters, people love him."

Weaver said a Huntley victory would have been "transformative" — replacing one of the biggest obstacles to sweeping tenant-friendly legislation in the State Assembly with a tenant champion — but she vowed to push on.

"Next time," she said. "It's not like we're going to go away for the next two years."

Because DSA is a hybrid organization that combines electoral and non-electoral activities, its work is ongoing. Valdez's victory, said NYC-DSA spokesperson Jeremy Cohan, will help boost the organization's labor organizing campaigns while Huntley's emphasis on affordable housing has opened new possibilities for tenant organizing in his district.

"Our theory of election campaigns is that the infrastructure should not disappear with the candidate," Cohan added.

For his part, Huntley already sounded like he was ready for a rematch as he urged his mostly youthful supporters to not be discouraged. He reminded them that Michael Jordan didn't make his high school basketball team the first time he tried out, that Barack Obama lost his first run for Congress and that Jabari Brisport had lost a City Council race in 2017 before winning his State Senate seat in 2020.

Speaking afterwards to *The Indypendent*, Huntley said, "We've planted the seeds that will germinate later."

KARA MCCURDY

**SO CLOSE:** *Eon Huntley addresses his supporters after narrowly losing in Assembly District 56.*

**UNION MADE:** *UAW union organizer Claire Valdez will be DSA's ninth socialist legislator in Albany.*

JAMES HARRIS

**HEAD HELD HIGH:** *Jamaal Bowman speaks at his election night watch party.*

# Why Jamaal Bowman lost

## AIPAC & 8 other reasons Squad member was defeated

By John Tarleton

In June of 2020, Jamaal Bowman rode the tsunami of Black Lives Matter protests from the Bronx middle school where he was principal to Capitol Hill as the representative for New York's 16th congressional district. Four years later, he became the first member of the Squad, a group of eight outspoken leftwing members of Congress, to lose their re-election bid, falling by 17 points to Westchester County Executive George Latimer. Here are nine reasons Bowman was toppled.

### AIPAC

Any Bowman post-mortem has to start with the role of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the powerhouse pro-Israel lobby group that spent $14.5 million on the race — flooding the airwaves with ads lauding Latimer and denouncing Bowman. AIPAC's largesse in turn allowed Latimer to exploit all his other advantages.

### GERRYMANDERING

In 2020, 41% of registered voters in NY16 lived in the Bronx. After redistricting in 2022, that number dropped to 15% as the district shifted further north into whiter, more affluent parts of Westchester County. In this year's primary, Bowman won the Bronx part of his district by 84-16% while Latimer won Westchester by 63-37%. If the district lines had remained the same, Bowman likely cruises to re-election.

### RACISM

With the district lines redrawn, Latimer didn't hesitate to use racist dog whistles to paint Bowman as an "angry Black man" and a representative who was only concerned about his Black and Latino constituents. Latimer's use of white grievance politics shouldn't have been surprising. He once compared Andrew Cuomo to Emmitt Till when the former governor was being investigated for sexual harassment.

### THE FIRE ALARM

Bowman pulled a Capitol Hill fire alarm last September en route to a budget vote. He later pled guilty to a single misdemeanor charge. The video footage of Bowman doing the deed is damning and served as perfect fodder for AIPAC attack ads.

### THE BIDEN FACTOR

Bowman was repeatedly denounced in attack ads for not voting for the 2021 Infrastructure Bill. The legislative history around this is convoluted and mostly forgotten, but here goes. Once upon a time, there was a second much more ambitious piece of legislation called Build Back Better. It was backed by the president and presented as the signature domestic initiative of his presidency. It would have created an array of new government initiatives (permanent child tax credit, investments in child care, better Medicare benefits for the elderly, to name a few) to make life easier for ordinary Americans. It also could have helped Biden coast to re-election in 2024 and stave off a Trump restoration. Despite opinion polls showing these programs having broad public support, a handful of conservative Democrats blocked Build Back Better. Biden ultimately caved to their demands. The Infrastructure Bill was "decoupled" from Build Back Better and passed with Republican support over the objections of Bowman and other Squad members. For fighting harder for the Biden agenda than Biden and other party leaders, Bowman and his fellow Squad members have been branded ever since as disloyal. The conservative Democrats who obstructed Build Back Better for months have skated with no reputational damage.

### OCTOBER 7TH AFTERMATH

AIPAC's attack ads didn't focus on Israel because much of Westchester County's large Jewish population was already furious at Bowman for calling for a ceasefire and for labeling Israel's assault on Gaza a "genocide." Those voters came out in overwhelming numbers.

### LACK OF LOCAL NETWORKS

Bowman was elected in 2020 as a political outsider. Latimer, meanwhile, has held various local offices in Westchester County since 1987. When AIPAC recruited Latimer with the promise of unlimited financial backing, he already had extensive local political networks in place that he could activate.

### LACK OF CAMPAIGN INFRASTRUCTURE

For most of his time in office, Bowman was a tepid fundraiser compared to some of the other Squad members who have large small-dollar donor followings. He had only about $200,000 in the bank when October 7 supercharged his opposition. AIPAC saw weakness and pounced.

### HIS OWN CONSCIENCE

Bowman traveled to Israel in 2021 and visited the Occupied West Bank — something most visiting politicians pass up on when they travel to Israel — and later recalled being appalled by the oppressive, apartheid system Israel had imposed on the Palestinians. He began speaking out. As a former educator, Bowman has also said he couldn't remain quiet while Israel killed more than 15,000 children in Gaza and left thousands more as amputees and orphans. For this, he paid the price.

MET COUNCIL ON HOUSING

# NYC BRIEFS

BY INDYPENDENT STAFF

**THE RENT IS TOO DAMN HIGH:** *Assemblymember Zohran Mamdani (D-Queens) speaks to tenants protesting outside the June 17 meeting of the Rent Guidelines Board.*

## RGB APPROVES RENT INCREASES AMID PROTESTS, ARRESTS

Once again, the city Rent Guidelines Board has voted to raise rents on the city's roughly 1 million rent-stabilized apartments. On June 17, it voted to allow increases of up to 2.75% for a one-year lease renewal and 5.25% for two years. The increases, which go into effect Oct. 1, continue the board's pattern under Mayor Eric Adams; during Bill de Blasio's eight-year tenure, the highest one-year increase it approved was 1.5%. Hundreds of people protested outside the vote, at a Hunter College auditorium, and 10 were arrested, including Assemblymembers Marcela Mitaynes (D-Brooklyn) and Zohran Mamdani (D-Queens). The RGB's staff had reported that landlords' incomes for buildings containing at least one rent-stabilized unit had risen by 10.4% in the most recent year available, while their operating costs went up 6.1%. Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal (D-Manhattan) called the vote "an utter betrayal of the city's tenants."

## LANDER EYES CONGESTION PRICING LAWSUIT

City Comptroller Brad Lander announced June 12 that he is considering asking state courts to rule that Gov. Kathy Hochul illegally put the city's congestion-pricing plan for Manhattan on "indefinite pause." The plan to charge drivers going south of 60th Street a $15 toll was scheduled to go into effect June 30. "Halting the implementation of congestion pricing harms New York City's goals of reducing emissions and improving air quality, and leaves a $15 billion hole in the MTA's Capital Program," Lander said in a statement. The comptroller argued that stopping the plan might violate a 2019 state congestion-pricing measure, environmental laws, and the Americans with Disabilities Act, if it delays improving subway stations' accessibility. Gov. Hochul said she delayed the plan because the $15 charge would be too harsh on working-class people driving into the city. Transport Workers Union President John Samuelsen and the United Federation of Teachers opposed it on similar grounds.

## CITY COUNCIL QUESTIONS BROKER FEES

A bill to ban landlords from forcing tenants to pay real-estate brokers' fees to get an apartment has amassed 33 cosponsors in the City Council, but drawn fierce opposition from the real-estate industry. The Real Estate Board of New York brought more than 100 real-estate agents to a Council hearing on June 12. "The FARE Act, while well-intentioned, could lead to higher rents and reduced listing visibility, ultimately harming tenants," testified Brian Phillips, an associate broker at Douglas Elliman. "I do not think there is any reason for me to pay one month's rent or more to a person a landlord hired to post something on StreetEasy or Zillow," responded Annie Abreu, a frustrated apartment-hunter from Sunset Park, Brooklyn. Speaker Adrienne Adams has not yet said if she'll bring the measure to the floor. Mayor Adams, a former real-estate broker, has not yet taken a position on it.

## RAMOS FLUSHES FLUSHING CASINO

State Sen. Jessica Ramos (D-Queens) announced May 28 that she won't introduce a bill to let Mets owner Steve Cohen use city parkland to build a casino in her district. "We want investment and opportunity, we are desperate for green space, and recreation for the whole family," she said in a statement. "We disagree on the premise that we have to accept a casino in our backyard as the trade-off." Cohen, a billionaire hedge-fund manager, working with Hard Rock International, had proposed using a part of Flushing Meadows Corona Park to build an $8 billion casino next to Citi Field, and needed the state to enact legislation that added gambling to the parkland's permitted uses. Instead, Ramos offered to introduce a bill to let the developers build a convention center and hotel on a parcel of land near LaGuardia Airport, enabling them to "still make a profit, albeit less."

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SHANNON STAPLETON

SUE BRISK

# Eric Garner, 10 years later

## What happened to the cops who killed him?

By Theodore Hamm

Ten years ago on July 17, Eric Garner struggled to avoid arrest for the charge of selling untaxed "loosie" cigarettes near the Staten Island ferry terminal. NYPD plainclothes officer Daniel Pantaleo then placed the 43-year-old in a chokehold that killed him.

Garner's last words, "I can't breathe!" became a rallying cry for the Black Lives Matter movement that erupted in 2014.

In early December of that year, a Staten Island grand jury decided not to indict Pantaleo, igniting widespread protests against the NYPD and then-New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio.

After a protracted federal investigation also produced no indictment, the City's Civilian Complaint Review Board brought charges against Pantaleo that resulted in his firing by NYPD Commissioner James O'Neill in August 2019. This added fuel to the cops' hostility to de Blasio but did not diminish activists' ire against the former mayor — given that it took five years to simply get Pantaleo off the force.

But as anyone who watched Ramsey Orta's viral cell-phone video of the fatal incident can attest, Pantaleo was not the only officer involved in Garner's death.

Although Garner's mother Gwen Carr and the grassroots organization the Justice Committee have consistently pushed for accountability for the other officers involved, no one other than Pantaleo has faced meaningful disciplinary action. Despite clear negligence at the murder scene and blatant lies in their initial reports, many of the Garner cops have since been promoted.

*The Indypendent* calculates that since 2014, these same six officers have received over $7.5 million in salaries (plus overtime) from the city, an expenditure that increases substantially when including pensions and health care.

Let's review the Garner cops' handiwork.

A few months before the Garner killing, NYPD Chief of Department Phil Banks called attention to untaxed cigarette sales on Bay Street, near the ferry terminal. Prior to the mid-July incident, Banks ordered a crackdown. (Banks, later implicated in an untaxed liquor racket, is now the most powerful deputy mayor in the Adams administration.)

Starting in March 2014, Lt. Christopher Bannon of the 120th Precinct monitored the Bay Street site for the sale of loosies. Over the next two months cops arrested Garner twice for the low-level infraction.

On July 17, Lt. Bannon and Sergeant Dhanan Saminath sent officers Pantaleo and Justin D'Amico to 200 Bay St. Both Pantaleo and D'Amico knew Garner from previous encounters. D'Amico told CCRB investigators that he understood Lt. Bannon's original directions to mean "make an arrest if he observed illegal activity."

The two officers dubiously explained to the CCRB that on the ride over to Bay Street, "they did not speak to each other about the assignment." Instead, "the only conversation that they had was about what was on the radio." The duo parked over 300 feet from 200 Bay Street. From that distance, D'Amico maintained that he saw Garner make a loosie transaction — whereas Pantaleo said that a car blocked his view.

**POLICE IMPUNITY:** *Black Lives Matter protesters demand justice for Eric Garner on the fifth anniversary of his death at the hands of NYPD Officer Daniel Panteleo.*

**TIRELESS:** *Eric Garner's mother Gwen Carr leads a march through Staten Island on the fifth anniversary of her son's death.*

When confronted by the officers, Garner made it clear that he was sick of being harassed, ominously stating "I'm tired of it. This stops today."

After calling in back-up, Pantaleo initiates the deadly encounter, choking Garner for about 10 seconds. As Garner asserts "I can't breathe" 11 times, Pantaleo presses Garner's head into the sidewalk for another few seconds. Even though D'Amico and three uniformed cops now had Garner in handcuffs, Pantaleo claimed that the face press was necessary in order to keep Garner "from biting."

As Garner lay limp, none of the officers did anything to help him, with D'Amico later explaining that he thought the victim was "playing possum."

Both Pantaleo and D'Amico later said that they opted not to use pepper spray because they did not want to douse each other. D'Amico has also claimed that he never heard Garner say "I can't breathe."

At the scene, Pantaleo repeatedly told Sgt. Saminath that he saw Garner selling a loosie and that instead of a chokehold, he pulled the big man down by his shirt. The lying had only just begun.

In the immediate aftermath of the incident, Sgt. Saminath texted Lt. Bannon that "Danny [and] Justin went to collar Garner [and] he resisted. While they were trying to gain control of him he went into cardiac arrest. … Might be doa."

"They observed him selling [a loosie],"

Saminath's text further stated, but after Garner refused to comply, "Danny then tried to grab him and they both fell down."

"Not a big deal," Lt. Bannon responded to Saminath's distorted account, "we were effecting a lawf[ul] arrest." According to Hell Gate's Nick Pinto, Bannon's callous statement caused "an uproar" when it surfaced in the 2019 departmental trial. On the stand, Bannon claimed that he was simply trying to put his officers' "mind[s] at ease," given that they had experienced a "bad situation."

After leaving the crime scene, D'Amico returned to the precinct and filed false paperwork. In addition to claiming that there had been no use of force, his arrest report then charged Garner with felony cigarette sales, meaning he had 10,000 or more. At the 2021 judicial inquiry into Garner's death, D'Amico said this was an honest mistake. "Due to the circumstances, I wasn't thinking clearly," he stated.

Soon after Ramsey Orta's cellphone video went viral, PIX 11 reported that the footage contradicted a police report that quoted both Sgt. Saminath and Sgt. Kizzy Adonis expressing doubts regarding the severity of Garner's condition. Adonis, a Black woman, was charged by the NYPD with failure to supervise at the scene, eventually losing 20 vacation days. Saminath was not charged. Officers Mark Ramos and Craig Furlani, who piled on top of Garner and aided in handcuffing him, faced no penalties.

As of June 2024, Christopher Bannon is Lt. Commander Detective of the NYPD's Central Robbery Division, a high-level unit that operates out of 1 Police Plaza. Adonis and Saminath remain sergeants with desk jobs. In the fall of 2022, D'Amico was promoted to detective at the 122nd Precinct on Staten Island's South Shore.

In 2023, Bannon added $93K in overtime to his base pay of $150K. Adonis boosted her $118K salary with $53K, while Saminath bumped up his same salary with an extra $90K. D'Amico added nearly $50K to his $104K salary. Ramos and Furlani both retired a few years ago at the 20-year mark.

For the Garner cops, the case really wasn't such a big deal, after all.

Meanwhile, Gwen Carr, a retired MTA train operator, continues to fight police brutality. In 2020 she pushed the state legislature to pass the Eric Garner Anti-Chokehold Act, outlawing the dangerous tactic. Two years ago, she launched the E.R.I.C. Initiative, a nonprofit that helps families affected by police violence.

Carr is also trying to sustain the national momentum for police reform, which has waned since the 2020 George Floyd protests. This past spring at the Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, Carr, along with relatives of Floyd and Tyre Nichols, denounced the lack of commitment by elected leaders.

"It's too late for our children," said Carr. "But we want to save other children."

ROBERT DEUTSCH

**A GOOD MAN:** *Eric Garner, 1970-2014.*

# Why police reform failed

## And what we really need

By Alex S. Vitale

Following the police murder of Eric Garner, and the massive protests against abusive policing, Mayor Bill de Blasio told us not to worry: the NYPD was going to reform itself. He insisted that a program of de-escalation training, implicit bias training, and body cameras, backed up by the work of the Civilian Complaint Review Board, would reduce abusive policing and restore public trust. Ten years later we have little to show for it. The NYPD continues to be a source of danger to those exposed to it, especially young men of color.

New York City spent tens of millions of dollars on these police reforms. But the city's own research showed that implicit bias training failed to make any difference at all in policing, which is consistent with academic research findings over the last decade. It is a ridiculous effort that imagines that the problems of racist police practices are accidental, unconscious and based on the discretionary decision making of individual officers. But the problem is so much deeper than that.

First, there is plenty of explicit racial bias among individual officers. Second, the NYPD as an institution has been a central force in maintaining the color line and continues to have a deeply racist internal culture. These patterns endure regardless of which demographic group leads the department. And third, the core mission of the NYPD is racist in that it treats the problems of communities of color as being "crime" problems to be suppressed by policing and incarceration, while the dilemmas of better-off communities are understood to be social problems to be addressed in less punitive and violent ways.

For the NYPD as well as most city leaders, the harmful behavior of corporations, employers and landlords are considered non-criminal manners, despite the fact that they kill, maim, poison, and steal from people at rates far above conventional "street crime."

De-escalation training has also been a failure. Over the last 10 years we have continued to see police escalate encounters over and over again, whether they involve young people hanging out on street corners, homeless people in the subway, or people experiencing a mental health crisis, even in their own homes (e.g. Win Rozario). Nor have body cameras done anything to reduce abusive policing. The public rarely gains access to the footage in a timely manner and instead the NYPD edits and releases only clips that tend to show them in the best possible light. There is a clear conflict of interest in allowing the NYPD to manage the footage.

Finally, the Civilian Complaint Review Board has failed in its alleged mission of holding police accountable. The whole enterprise is doomed to failure. It is underfunded, lacks adequate power, and can only deal with complaints about individual officers, not policies and practices. The board's investigations are routinely undermined by the NYPD, and the ultimate decisions on punishment are left to the NYPD leadership. When CCRB officials have attempted to actually use the office to hold police to account, they are pushed out because the political leadership of the city doesn't actually want police to be held accountable.

Unfortunately, the abusiveness and impunity of policing are not some accident or oversight that can be corrected with a few tweaks to training and oversight. These are features, not bugs, and if we want to reduce the harms of policing, we need to reduce the role of police in our lives in as many ways possible by creating community-centered safety practices to reduce violence, serious forms of disorder, and other harms.

# Copaganda

## No longer content with the deferential coverage it gets, the NYPD is now producing, starring in and distributing its own media creations

By John Teufel

In the last two months, we learned that Justice Samuel Alito has been caught hanging two Trump-supporting flags at properties he owns, the second tinged with militant end-times Christianity, before telling an undercover activist he hopes America returns to a place of "Godliness." How many reminders do we need that the law is fundamentally political, not just in its drafting but in its interpretation and enforcement? Why do people — mostly Democrats, mostly powerful — continue to pretend that there exist forms of state power drained of ideology, blind cherubs, umpires just calling the facts, ma'am?

The thing is, Alito is no different from a cop, who is no different from a mayor or a president. All are motivated not by bloodless principle but by the usual deranged combination of ideology, fetish, dopamine, and ego, the reasons anyone decides to pursue a profession where they hold legal power over others. Everybody knows this on some level. Fascists are honest about it. The left decries it. Only the truly deluded, mostly periodically sundowning folks like Joe Biden, continue to cling to the notion that state actors are honorable, and institutions operating for some higher purpose.

So while the idea that enforcers of law are politically neutral is clearly nonsense, it is extremely useful for the powerful to maintain the illusion that, for example, the police are arresting you for violating a law, rather than because you are Black, or annoying, or said something that offended their sensibilities. When we see videos of cops swinging batons and cracking heads, it is easier to believe that they were preserving the order that society needs to function rather than hippie-punching or working out their issues with their fathers or whatever. If the police tilt too far into becoming open enforcers of ideology, it undermines the entire system.

I've been thinking about this lately as we've watched the NYPD morph from their typical defensive/aggressive media posture to something far more disturbing: a primary source of bluntly politicized misinformation, even conspiracy theory, and an organization that feels no compunction about threatening elected officials who don't tow their line.

The worst offender here has been a man named John Chell, who currently serves as the NYPD's Chief of Patrol, effectively the boss of beat cops throughout the city. Chell is one of those central casting cops, an overweight Irish-coded bruiser with a thick New York accent who, in times prior, could be imagined pocketing sacks of gold nuggets from an old-timey crime boss played by Daniel Day Lewis. In our modern era, Chell goes on Newsmax to boast about the NYPD's "flawless" invasion of Columbia University, and to urge Columbia administrators to again call in the troops so they can "take care of business." Newsmax, of course, is the openly Trump-supporting cable news channel whose business strategy over the past seven years has been to get to the right of Fox News to steal away their fascist viewership.

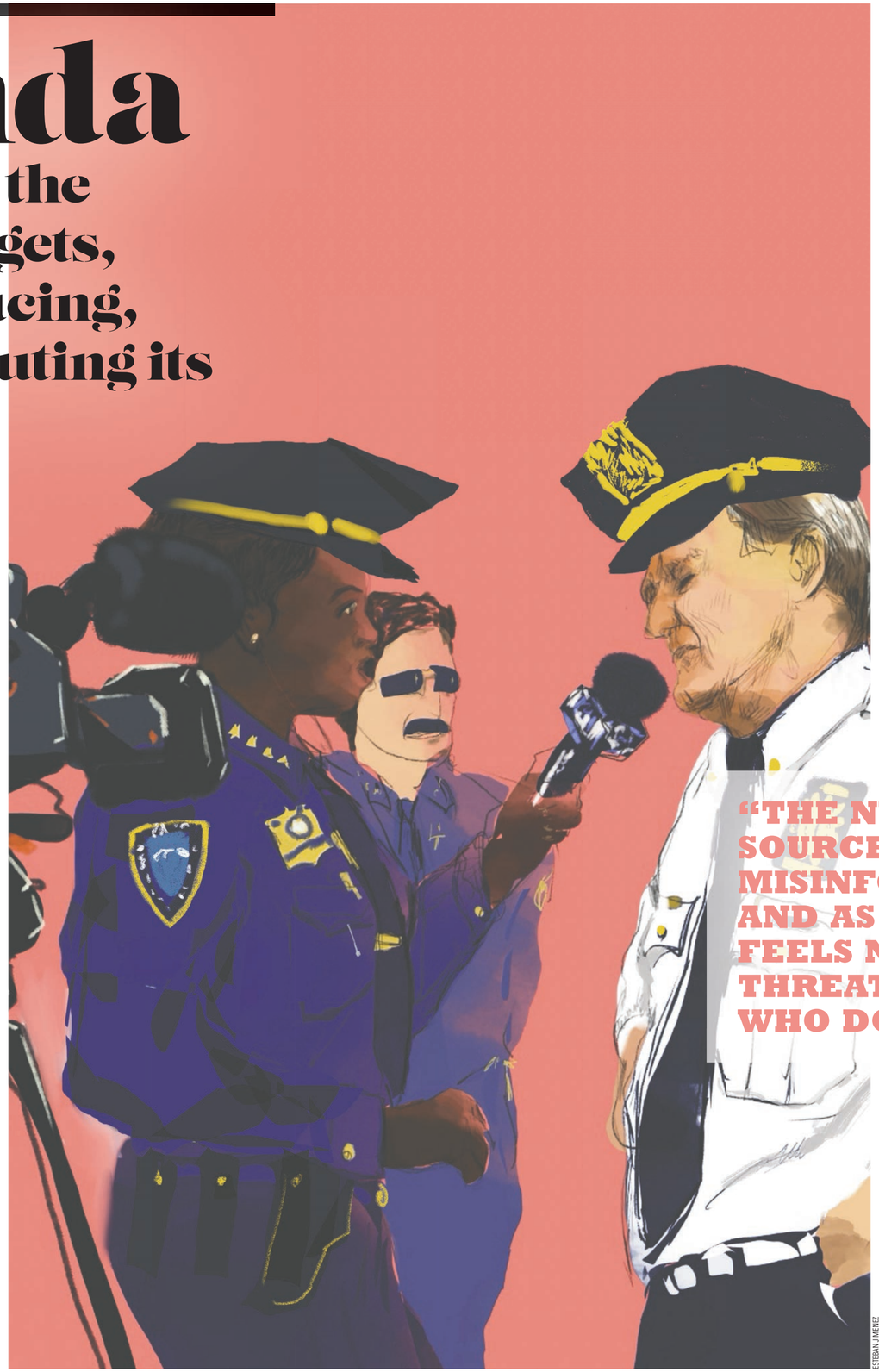
Two days after Chell's first Newsmax interview, the NYPD again raided Columbia, this time in far more brutal fashion. And two days after that, Chell was right back on Newsmax, telling their exclusively MAGA viewers that his cops "went really heavy" and "took back that campus" from "outside agitators." Chell also offered his own take on education policy, opining that protesters should be expelled, and any professors who supported their actions fired.

It was in this second interview that Chell dipped heavily into the conspiracy theory well: UCLA — a campus he had no personal knowledge of — was rife with "outside agitators," just like Columbia. Chell asked rhetorically, and darkly: "What is funding this? What is underneath it? Because some of these kids have no idea what they're doing. Who is hijacking this, radicalizing them to do this?"

Of course, none of this uninformed speculation has borne fruit, and nearly all the people arrested at Columbia were students of the university. No "funding source" (for what? keffiyehs and flags?) has ever turned up. There is no shadowy, deep-pocketed movement brainwashing your children. There's just kids who are sick of the United States backing a genocide.

Chell followed up this performance by taking to Twitter to claim Councilmember Tiffany Caban "hates our city" and "does not represent the great people of NYC," even though, as an elected official, she does exactly that. (In a fun bit of typical NYPD buffoonery, Chell's tweet was deleted, according to the NYPD, by accident when an employee tried to make it his pinned tweet. These people are really beyond parody.) Chell's outburst against Caban was reminiscent of his February rage-tweet against a sitting NYC judge, except there, he named the wrong judge, whoops!

Chell, to me, seems like your garden variety racist NYPD thug, a dim bulb to be sure, but a guy who can at least tie his own shoes in the morning, even if he does it with blinding rage, pulling the ears so tight that the bunny starts to scream. Contrast that with NYPD Deputy Commissioner of Operations Kaz Daughtry, who seems so wildly stupid that if I met him on the street without his uniform on I'd probably ask him if he got separated from his mommy. I mean I'm almost jealous, the man has one of those faces that seems to gaze in amazement at any moving object in his field of vision. Every day must be a new adventure.



ESTEBAN JIMENEZ

**"THE NYPD HAS BECOME A PRIMARY SOURCE OF BLUNTLY POLITICIZED MISINFORMATION, EVEN CONSPIRACY, AND AS AN ORGANIZATION THAT FEELS NO COMPUNCTION OVER THREATENING ELECTED OFFICIALS WHO DON'T TOE THE LINE."**

Daughtry, who tagged along with Chell for that second Newsmax interview, is now primarily known for holding up an academic textbook called *Terrorism: A Very Short Introduction* for the Newsmax hosts as though it were a how-to manual and not what it actually is, a boring-sounding "101"-style intro text by a respected British historian. (The reaction by the Newsmax hosts, all awed wows, is hilarious.) It is hard for me to wrap my mind around this. Do people like Daughtry believe that there are bound, Oxford-published books designed to teach you how to commit terrorism? What does that say about the brainpower running the NYPD?

Daughtry is also a rage-tweeter, having gone after journalist Talia Jane by retweeting a post by right-wing weirdo Oren Levy seeming to imply that cops should hit Jane in the head with a pipe. (I know I am using a lot of parentheticals, but there is always something else with these people — Levy, in a since deleted tweet, also broke the news that anarchist protesters were working with someone named Linda Mills … not realizing that Linda Mills is the president of NYU.)

The above is not the full extent of the NYPD's media push. Chell recently went on Dr. Phil (who was also in the news recently for "embedding" with the LAPD as they beat the shit out of anti-genocide UCLA protestors) to push another favored Eric Adams conspiracy theory, the "immigrant crime wave" (which is in itself a close cousin of the "Great Replacement Theory" embraced by white nationalists).

As New York Focus has reported, the current NYPD public relations shop has swelled to 86 staffers earning copious overtime, and led not by a media professional, but by a cop — Deputy Commissioner Tarik Sheppard, who himself earned a substantiated misconduct charge for pinning a woman to the ground and tasing her during a 2020 Black Lives Matter protest. Daughtry recently posted a video to his Twitter account of Sheppard pulling down a Palestine flag and replacing it with an American one. In his tweet Daughtry called our flag "Old Glory," something nobody in New York City would ever say who isn't a cop. So you can see how this whole thing is circular.

Daughtry ascended from detective to top NYPD brass overnight by virtue of being extremely close to Adams confidante and current Chief of Department Jeffrey Maddrey. How close? Close enough that, according to a lawsuit, Daughtry served as Maddrey's driver while Maddrey was forcing a low-ranking female officer into sexual trysts while beating her up here and there. Maddrey is also, reportedly, the reason former NYPD Commissioner Keechant Sewell was forced out of a job — she tried to discipline him for voiding the arrest of a former cop who chased a bunch of kids around waving a gun, a rare attempt at enforcing accountability inside the NYPD which Adams did not like one bit.

It isn't surprising that the NYPD is run by a bunch of rightwing nutjobs, for the simple reason that lots of cops are rightwing nutjobs. One 2023 study found that police officers are more than twice as likely to be registered Republicans as civilians residing in the same jurisdiction. The percentage of Republicans in the NYPD is likely even higher than this, as 52% of NYPD officers reside outside of the city, opting for the more Trump-leaning suburbs. And NYPD leadership is no stranger to the vortex of MAGA conspiracy — the since indicted former head of the sergeant's union, Ed Mullins, gave a Zoom interview to Fox News with a QAnon mug (they have mugs!) proudly displayed in the background.

Fascism itself is deeply entwined with conspiracy theory, perhaps the most well-known being Hitler's obsession with Jews, an anti-Semitism that continues to this day in MAGAworld. When Chell and Daughtry paint ominous pictures of shadowy figures brainwashing the minds of your children, they are borrowing from an old playbook. Fascists are, by definition, deprived of the ability to speak plainly about the nature of power and class, and so they must find convenient bogeymen to blame for public grievances. Immigrants, Jews, intellectuals, Black people, trans people, Muslims … all have spent their time in fascist crosshairs. The NYPD is continuing a long and proud tradition.

That said, it is still shocking to see the NYPD go full mask-off. It would seem unsustainable — even New York's pro-cop white liberals would like to pretend the police force is not a QAnon convention, and Eric Adams does need to win reelection, after all. And that makes me wonder if Adams has simply lost control. When he removed Sewell, and put in her place the impotent figurehead Edward Caban. Adams messed up the chains of command and empowered strong-willed, ambitious men. Former Mayor Bill de Blasio learned early in his tenure that the NYPD functions more like its own independent state than an arm of his administration. Adams might soon learn the same lesson. Until then, we can look forward to more rage-tweets, more partisan attacks, and more sheer nuttiness from the out and proudly political organization known as the New York Police Department.

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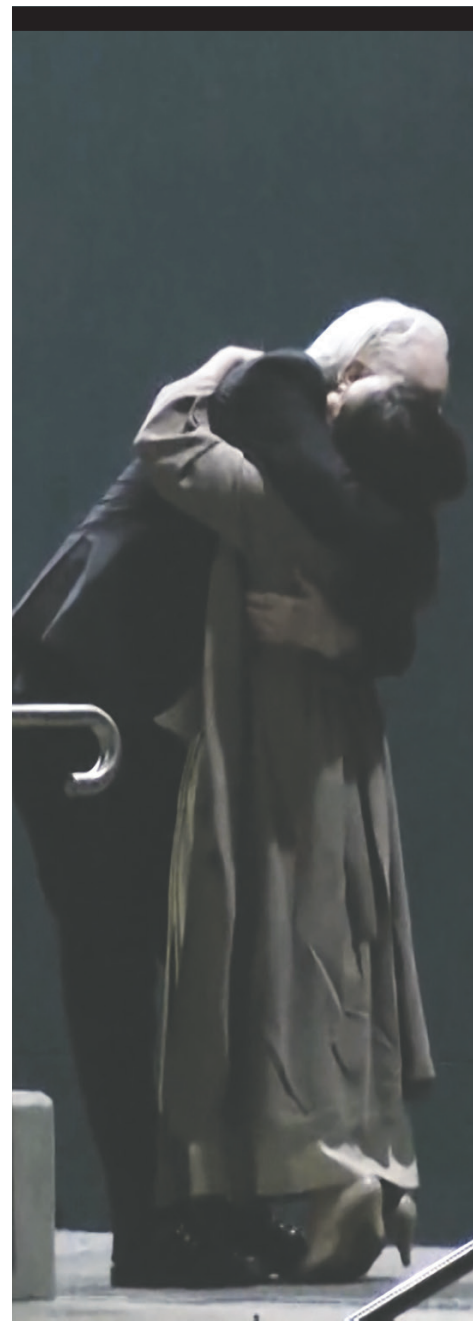

DEMOCRACY NOW

# Julian Assange, free at last

## Wikileaks publisher confined for more than a decade after he exposed U.S. war crimes

By Renée Feltz

Cries of "welcome home" greeted WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange as he disembarked from a chartered jet in the Australian capitol of Canberra a free man after he plead guilty to a single U.S. espionage charge and was sentenced to time served.

The shocking scene on June 26 ended a 12-year-long legal ordeal that began when Assange published classified documents detailing U.S. war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan, including video footage from 2007 showing a U.S. military Apache helicopter in Baghdad killing 12 civilians, including two Reuters journalists, Saeed Chmagh and Namir Noor-Eldeen. WikiLeaks titled the video "Collateral Murder".

After Chmagh survived the initial attack, the video shows him trying to crawl away while the helicopter flies overhead. U.S. forces open fire again when they notice a van pulling up to evacuate the wounded Chmagh. Soldier's chatter and laugh at the carnage in their crosshairs.

"We have individuals going to the scene, looks like possibly picking up bodies and weapons," says one soldier. "Let me engage. Can I shoot?," another asks. They get permission, and fire.

"Should have a van in the middle of the road with about 12 to 15 bodies," a soldier concludes. "Oh yeah, look at that. Right through the windshield! Ha ha!" His colleague responds.

When Assange landed in Australia he kissed his wife Stella and lifted her off the ground, then embraced his father while his legal team looked on. He did not address the media.

"Julian wanted me to sincerely thank everyone," Stella Assange told reporters. "He wanted to be here, but you have to understand what he's been through. He needs time. He needs to recuperate."

Assange spent the past five years locked up in the harsh Belmarsh Prison in London, and faced up to 175 years in U.S. prison if he was extradited and convicted on all 18 counts he was facing. Before that, he had spent seven years in the Ecuadorian Embassy, where he was given political asylum.

For more than a decade, press freedom groups were part of a grassroots campaign to demand successive U.S. administrations free Assange, who also published the Afghan War Logs on WikiLeaks in 2010 and shared them with The Guardian, The New York Times and the German weekly Der Spiegel. The Biden administration appears to have pushed through the final steps of the plea deal as he struggles to mollify anti-war voters ahead of the November election.

"It's important to recognize that Julian's release and the breakthrough in the negotiations came at a time where there had been a breakthrough in the legal case in the U.K., in the extradition, where the High Court had allowed permission to appeal," Stella Assange noted. "There was a court date set for the 9th and 10th of July, an upcoming court date in which Julian would be able to raise the First Amendment argument at the High Court. And it is in this context that things finally started to move. I think it revealed how uncomfortable the United States government is, in fact, of having these arguments aired, because this case — the fact is that this case is an attack on journalism, it's an attack on the public's right to know, and it should never have been brought. Julian should never have spent a single day in prison."

Meanwhile, the U.S. government's increasing use of the Espionage Act to prosecute and silence whistleblowers still casts a shadow over national security journalists whose work includes what Assange was accused of doing: "obtaining and disseminating classified information."

"This deal contemplates that Assange will have served five years in prison for activities that journalists engage in every day," said Jameel Jaffer, executive director of the Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University.

**HOME SWEET HOME:** *Julian Assange hugs his wife Stella Assange after he returns to Australia.*

**TARGETED:** *Wikileaks publisher Julian Assange's legal case was a threat to all journalists.*

DEMOCRACY NOW

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NINA BERMAN

**TEAMING UP:** *Amazon Labor Union President Chris Smalls leads a 2022 Labor Day march in Lower Manhattan. THE ALU recently affiliated with the Teamsters.*

# LABOR BRIEFS

**BY INDYPENDENT STAFF**

## AMAZON LABOR UNION AFFILIATES WITH TEAMSTERS, ALSO, SEAN O'BRIEN TO SPEAK AT RNC

Members of the grassroots Amazon Labor Union at Amazon's fulfillment center JFK8 on Staten Island voted nearly unanimously in June to affiliate with the 1.3-million-member International Brotherhood of Teamsters. ALU president Chris Smalls said they were "choosing a path to victory" and were "now stronger than ever before" in taking on the online retail giant. The agreement gives ALU sole jurisdiction over organizing Amazon warehouses in New York City's five boroughs. This comes as Teamsters President Sean O'Brien said he had accepted Trump's invitation to speak at the Republican National Convention, and that Democrats had not yet approved his request to address their convention. Usually a reliably Democratic voting bloc, the Teamsters have yet to endorse either Trump or Biden, who was the first sitting president to appear on a picket line when he backed striking members of the United Auto Workers, which has since endorsed him. ALU also has elections coming up between a slate backed by Smalls and a rival caucus that claims ALU leaders have fallen out of touch with rank-and-file workers.

## FOUR MORE STARBUCKS STORES UNIONIZE IN NYC REGION, SUPREME COURT SETBACK

All four New York City-area Starbucks stores with elections in June voted by a landslide to unionize. Workers at the Nassau Boulevard store in West Hempstead,and the 444 Broadway, Water Street and Fulton Street stores in Manhattan joined more than 460 union stores nationwide. Also in June, hundreds of Starbucks Workers United delegates representing certified union stores held bargaining sessions in Atlanta and remotely to establish a framework "intended to be the foundation of each single-store contract" as workers came together to create a better workplace for all. Starbucks meanwhile brewed up a victory at the Supreme Court after the justices ruled 8–1 to overturn a 2022 federal district finding that the coffee giant had violated labor law when it fired workers in Memphis for union organizing. Starbucks sued after the National Labor Relations Board ordered it to reinstate the workers. Workers United said the ruling "underscores how the economy is rigged against working people all the way up to the Supreme Court," but vowed "workers are continuing to organize."

## ULTIUM CELLS WINS BIG UAW CONTRACT

Members of the United Auto Workers at an Ohio plant that produces battery cells for General Motors electric vehicles ratified a new local contract in June and said they "want this agreement to become a cornerstone for current and future battery plants across the nation" by establishing new standards "with strong wages and benefits and historic health and safety protections." Ultium worker Lori Lovitz claimed "the benefits are just the best benefits I've had in my life." Most workers at the Lordstown plant will see an immediate raise of $3.59 per hour. Many will get a 30 percent raise over three years, and time-and-a-half pay after 10 hours of work on a single shift. This comes after GM agreed to include Ultium Cells workers in the UAW during a six-week strike against the Big 3 Detroit automakers last fall, and the UAW continues to expand its membership.

## NEW STUDY RELEASED ON BLM'S UNION ORGANIZING IMPACT

While researching his forthcoming book *We Are the Union: How Worker-to-Worker Organizing Is Revitalizing Labor,* Rutgers Prof. Eric Blanc surveyed workers and found Black Lives Matter was the most commonly cited social movement that had a "major" influence on their decision to unionize in 2022 — suggesting they saw the "struggle for better wages and working conditions as, among other things, a direct way to challenge racial injustice." Blanc concluded, "Leftists, in short, are justified in criticizing neoliberal anti-racism. But only focusing on this is one sided and strategically unhelpful. The recent labor uptick has clearly exposed the contradiction between corporate anti-racism and working-class anti-racism."

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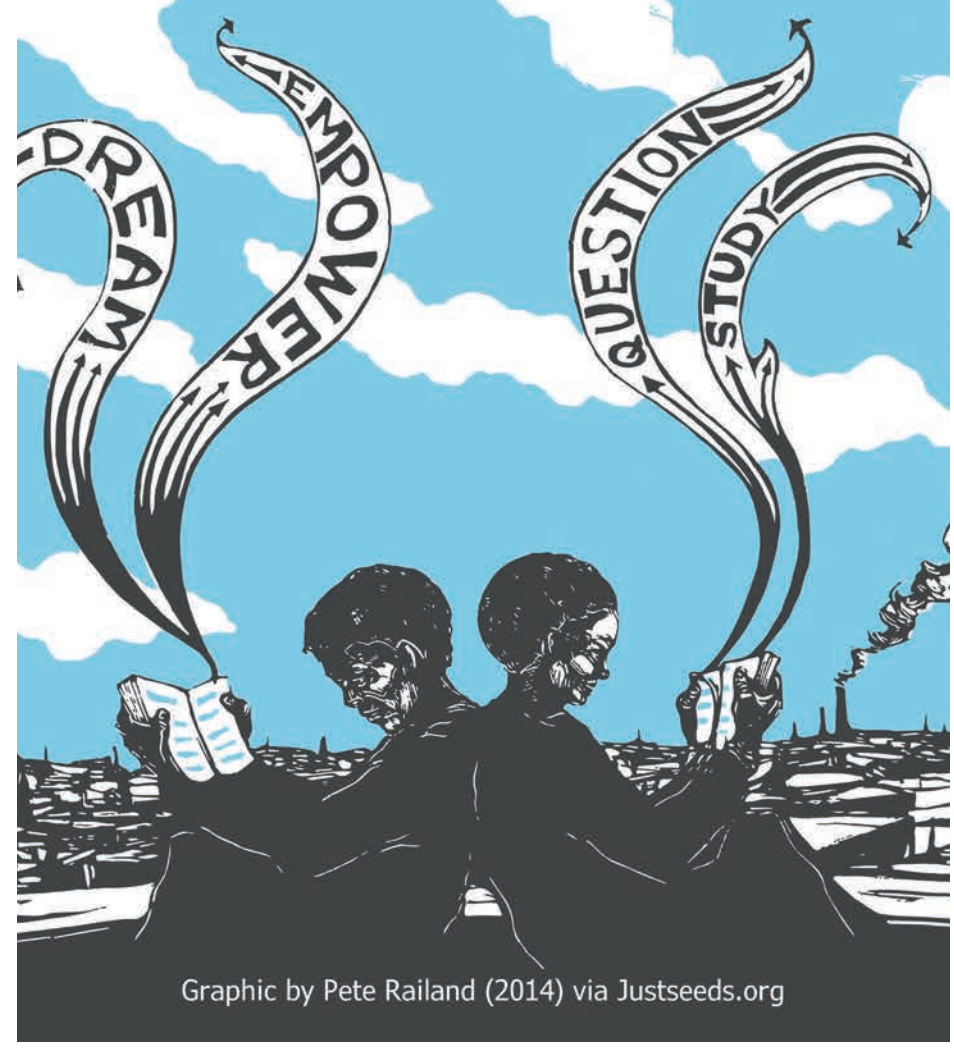


Graphic by Pete Railand (2014) via Justseeds.org

NEIL CONSTANTINE

**CAMPUS REVOLT:** *The NYPD arrests student anti-war protesters at Columbia University on April 18. A second round of raids and mass arrests took place at Columbia and the City College of New York on April 30.*

# Standing together

## Encampment arrestees confront legal system with solidarity

By Renée Feltz

Underneath the blue tiles that spell out "Columbia University" at the 116th subway stop, someone recently painted in red, "Divest Now!" The art echoed chants at a picket line upstairs, outside the gates of Barnard College.

*"One, we are the students*
*Two, we won't stop fighting*
*Three, we want divestment now, now,*
*now NOW!"*

At a closed hearing underway on campus, several students faced hearings about the future of their academic careers, which they say were unfairly jeopardized due to their participation in protests against the genocide in Palestine.

The Columbia University Apartheid Divest student coalition says they are being "selectively isolated" by Barnard president Laura Rosenbury and the Barnard disciplinary office" at the same time the schools have neglected harassment and attacks targeting Palestinian, Arab and Muslim students.

But resistance to the 'Palestine exception' in higher education remains strong in New York as students say they've learned the "power wielded by collective organizing."

This collective power shaped how they responded when Manhattan District Attorney's office recently dropped 31 of the 46 criminal cases against people charged with occupying Hamilton Hall for 17 hours and renaming it Hind's Hall after a six-year-old girl brutally killed by Israeli forces in Gaza.

District Attorney Bragg cited the fact that many protesters wore masks, and lack of video footage and other evidence as the reason for the decision not to prosecute many of the students.

Thirteen others arrested in the building — many of them alumni — were offered deals that would have led their charges to be dismissed, but refused them "in a show of solidarity with those facing the most extreme repression," said the Columbia University Apartheid Divest coalition.

Lack of specific proof was also given as the Manhattan District Attorney's Office reason for dropping felony burglary charges against seven of the CUNY 22, a group of students and faculty arrested at the Gaza Solidarity Encampment at City College after they refused to remove a Palestinian flag they had hung on a flagpole or take down their tents. Administrators called in the New York Police Department, who violently raided the peaceful protest with tear gas alongside CUNY police, who "broke the ankle of an undergraduate student, broke the teeth of two protestors, attacked and burned many students, faculty and at least one journalist with pepper spray at close range, and beat many more with batons" according to CUNY For Palestine.

The encampment's demands included a call for CUNY to divest from Israel's decades-long occupation of Palestine, just as it and Columbia had divested from apartheid South Africa. So far neither school has made this commitment and students say they continue to organize, nine months into Israel's U.S.-backed assault on Gaza.

DIALA AL-ABED

# A Palestinian poet takes flight

By Amba Guerguerian

"I had the best Arabic teacher. He made me love the Arabic language," says Finan Suwwan Al-Abed about why she started writing poetry. "When we moved from Palestine to Jordan, I was so attached to him that he was saying, 'Please let me keep Finan, let her stay, let me adopt the girl, and she can be my child!' My dad would laugh and laugh," said Suwwan, who moved to Jordan from Nablus in the West Bank in Occupied Palestine, where her family had lived for generations, when she was 10 years old in 1980.

When she was eight years old, an Israeli informant began to work as a teacher at her school, and once he was exposed, students took it upon themselves to strike. Suwwan's brother fervently promoted the strike. "My father was scared for my brother," said Suwwan. "He saw the signs that my brother would get himself into lots of problems fighting against the occupation."

This preoccupation, along with daily life becoming increasingly difficult under Israeli apartheid, led the family to move across the border.

In Jordan, Suwwan shared a bedroom with four of her sisters, and "there was no place to put the books, no shelves on the wall or anything like that, so I put them all under my bed. My mom would say, 'Finan, look at all the dust!'"

"In Jordan, it was hard for us. Everyone in Nablus knew us. No one knew us here," said Suwwan. She and her family were denied entry when they tried to go back to Nablus around 1985.

Suwwan's family had been well embedded in their small village in Nablus City. Her father used her grandmother's house to make the first school in the village; he was responsible for setting up electricity in the village, which he provided from his property via a large generator.

"When there is something deeply I feel, I write about it," said Suwwan, who began to write poetry as a teenager.

In 1993 Suwwan moved to Western North Carolina and has lived in the area ever since. She married a Palestinian-American with whom she has three children. With work and childrearing, Suwwan had no time to try and promote a career in literature, but she has never stopped writing poetry. "Sometimes in the car I get an idea and I just pull over and write it down," she says.

**FIRST TIME:** *Palestinian poet Finan Suwwan Al-Abed*

"When Facebook started in 2008, I started to connect with poets from the Middle East," said Suwwan. She was connected with poet friends in Gaza, and they would deliver to her news from Gaza."It was always bad news," said Suwwan when I asked her why she wrote "Gaza," the poem printed below. During the 2012 Israeli operation in Gaza, some of her Facebook friends "would disappear and I would hear nothing from them after that."

I met Suwwan at a pro-Palestine protest in Asheville, North Carolina, just after Israel's "tent massacre" in a "safe zone" in Rafah. As she read this poem in front of the crowd, I felt the same fervor that I feel when I hear the voice of Mahmoud Darwish. So when I approached Suwwan after to ask if *The Indypendent* could reprint this poem, I was shocked to hear this would be her first time being published.

| | |
|---|---|
| **غزة.....** | **Gaza** |
| قال الزهر آآآآه!<br>رائحة الموت يا وطني أنتَ<br>والحزن يا وطني تفضحه الضحكات لا الدموع | *The roses wailed*<br>*The scent of death, my homeland, is within you*<br>*And the sorrow is unveiled by laughter, not in tears* |
| قال الزهر آآآآه!<br>يا قاتلي ....<br>أنا ابن شجرة السرو حفرت عليها أسماؤنا<br>يا قاتلي.....<br>أنا ابن شجرة الزيتون-تجذرت بأرضها<br>يا قاتلي.....<br>أنا ابن سنابل القمح ولوني من حنطتها | *The roses wailed*<br>*My murderer*<br>*I am the offspring of the pine, where our names are carved*<br>*My murderer*<br>*I am the child of the olive, rooted in this earth*<br>*My murderer*<br>*I am the son of wheat, my skin kissed by its tan.* |
| قال الزهر آآآآه!<br>ما هوينا الحزن يومًا وما كنا له غاوين<br>جراحنا يا ولدي وان توقف نزفها<br>نُدُوبها تذكرنا بالسكاكين. | *The roses wailed*<br>*We never loved sadness, nor craved it*<br>*Our wounds, oh my child, even if they cease to bleed*<br>*The scars remind us of the knives* |
| قال الزهر آآآآه!<br>رائحة الموت يا وطني أنتَ<br>والحزن يا وطني تفضحه الضحكات لا الدموع | *The roses wailed*<br>*The scent of death, my homeland, is within you*<br>*And the sorrow is unveiled by laughter, not in tears* |
| اليوم إن زرعت<br>الشوق على أعتابي...جنانًا<br>كلام العشق لن أقرأ | *Today, even if you plant gardens of yearning upon my doorstep*<br>*I shall not read any words of love* |
| عاتبني إن شئت<br>بالغياب عاقبني<br>لا قصائد الشعر<br>اليوم اهوى<br>لا موسيقى شوبان<br>تغريني<br>لا حلم لي أخبئه ليكبر | *Blame me if you must*<br>*In your absence, punish me*<br>*I don't love poetry today*<br>*And Chopin's melody fails to seduce me*<br>*No dreams within me are hidden to flourish today* |
| اليومُ.....<br>اليوم الحرف غــزة<br>الكلام غـــزة<br>القصيدة غــزة<br>الشعر غــزة<br>الحياة والموت غــزة | *For each letter today bears the weight of Gaza*<br>*Words are Gaza*<br>*Poems are Gaza*<br>*Poetry is Gaza*<br>*Life and death, all Gaza* |
| وان أردتني ان اقرأ حرفك<br>أكتبه غزة. | *If you wish for me to read your letters, inscribe Gaza* |

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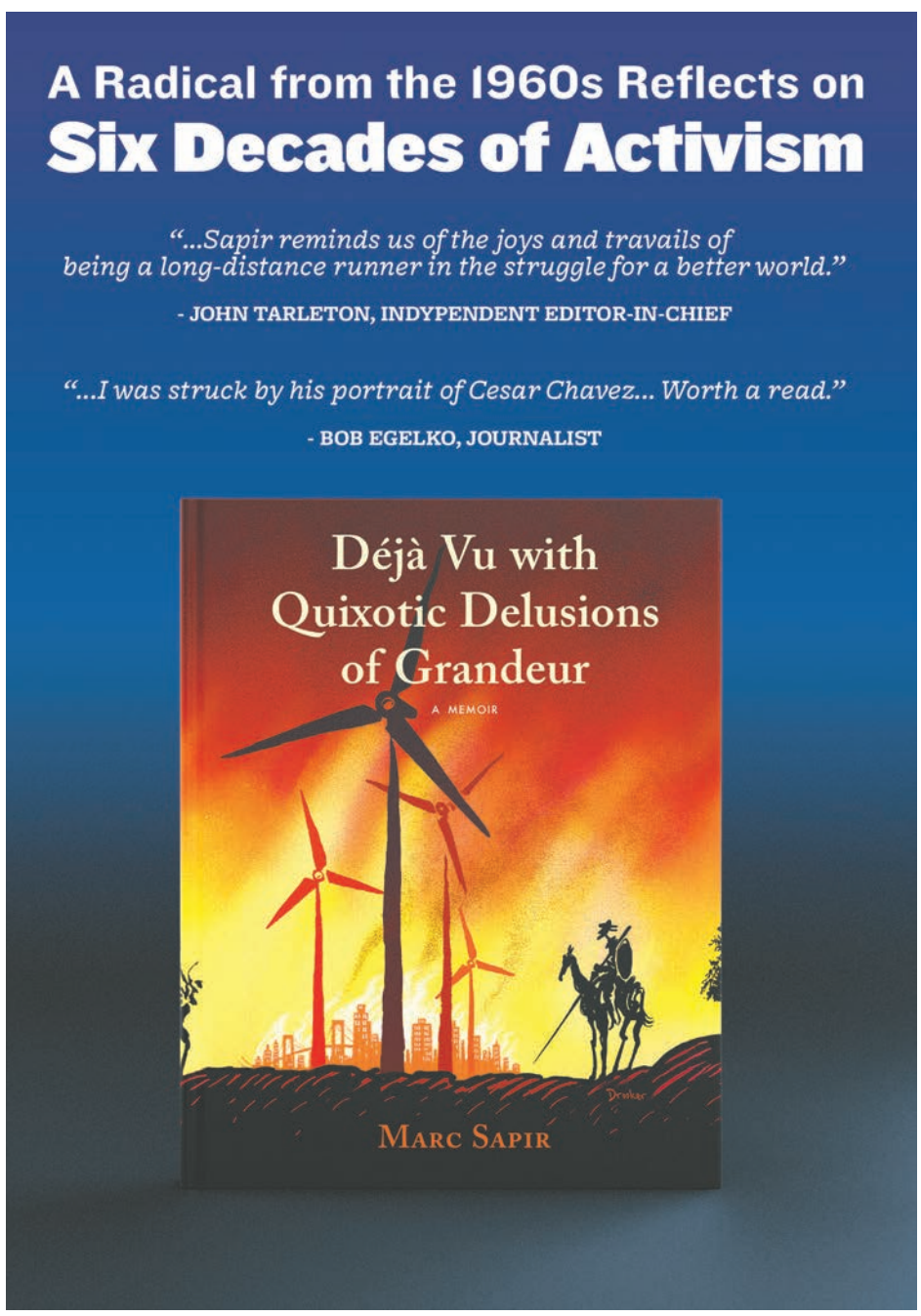
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MARC SAPIR



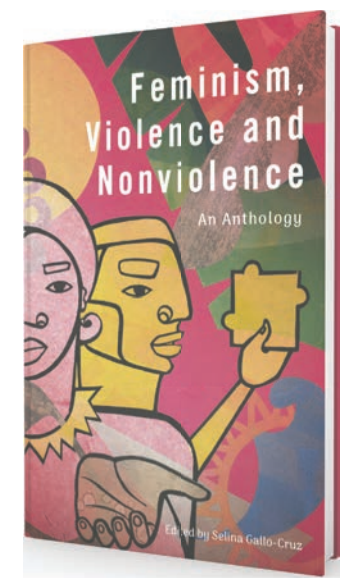
# Feminism & nonviolence

*Feminism, Violence and Nonviolence: An Anthology*
Edited by Selina Gallo-Cruz
Edinburgh University Press, 234 pages, May 2024

*By Eleanor J. Bader*

During the 1970s and 1980s, many feminists pushed the armed forces to allow women to serve in combat. Many also organized to demand that police forces diversify and bring more women and people of color into their ranks. But this segment of the women's movement did not represent everyone. A smaller but hugely vocal constituency opposed violence, militarism, police expansion and colonialism, and argued that an equal opportunity to maim or kill would do nothing to create the equitable societies they sought to build.

Unfortunately, their efforts often get short shrift in historical accounts of the era. The anthology *Feminism, Violence and Nonviolence* zeroes in on the influence of pacifist thought on Second Wave feminism. The book highlights the many intersections between war, interpersonal violence and women's oppression.




It's a valuable collection. Nonetheless, because the essays were written between the early 1970s and the late 1990s — and the book does not create a bridge to contemporary feminist, peace, and social justice efforts — it will largely serve as a resource for historians, researchers, and scholars.

The anthology offers an expansive view of violence. As the late Barbara Deming, a writer active in the War Resisters League and World Peace Brigade for Nonviolent Action, noted in a 1971 essay "On Anger": "Bullets and bombs are not the only means by which people are killed. If a society denies certain of its members food or medical attention, or a political voice, the sense of their own worth, the freedom to exercise their talents, this too is waging war of a kind."

Indeed.

Native American sociologist Winona LaDuke, executive director of Honor the Earth, offers a stark illustration of this, writing that radiation has contaminated Native lands and waterways, contributing to an astronomical spike in cancer among the Acoma, Laguna, and Navajo peoples. In "Red Lands and Uranium Mines," written in 1981, she reports that: "One-half of all United States uranium resources and one-third of all Western low-sulfur coal lie under Indian lands. To the Bureau of Indian Affairs and organizations such as the Council of Energy Resource Tribes, these resources are seen as the ladder to economic development of impoverished reservations. … A contingent of Indians, however, believe that the resources should be left in the ground."

Eco-feminist Vandana Shiva agrees with LaDuke but goes further, arguing that ecological devastation is explicitly tied to corporate greed and unfettered global capitalism. She calls on us to oppose both. In excerpts from 1988's "Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development," she stresses, "While gender subordination and patriarchy are the oldest of oppressions, they have taken on new and more violent forms through the project of development. … Development projects appropriated or destroyed the natural resource base for the production of sustenance and survival. … The destruction of ecologically sound traditional technologies, often created and used by women, along with the destruction of their material base, is generally believed to be responsible for the feminization of poverty in societies which have had to bear the costs of resource destruction."

And it has only gotten more dire in the 36 years since these words were written.

This reality underscores *Feminism, Violence and Nonviolence* and reinforces its potent intersectional and international focus. Nonetheless, some of the 47 essays, especially those debating the efficacy of fighting back against a rapist, are dated. Similarly advice about staying safe while walking alone after dark, penned before cell phones became ubiquitous, needs to be updated.

Editor Selina Gallo-Cruz acknowledges these limitations but stresses that the book captures "a pivotal historical moment during which activists questioned how nonviolence might be applied to effectively transform violent systems of aggression, from rape to war." The words of feminist luminaries — among them Charlotte Bunch, Andrea Dworkin, Audre Lorde, Pam McAllister, and Adrienne Rich — provide an important grounding in pro-peace tactics and strategies. What's more, by tracing the ways misogyny is learned, internalized, and transmitted, *Feminism, Violence and Nonviolence* challenges patriarchal domination and highlights the ongoing impact that racism, sexism, colonialism, displacement, interpersonal violence, and war continue to have on the lives of women and their loved ones.

BUCKY BALDWIN

**TAKING CENTER STAGE:** *Reverend Billy and the Church of Stop Shopping Choir perform in Bridgeport, CT as the opening act for Neil Young and Crazy Horse's new concert tour.*

# On the road again

*Reverend Billy and the Church of Stop Shopping Choir have been performing in front of crowds of as many as 20,000 people as the opening act for Neil Young and Crazy Horse in their latest nationwide concert tour.*

By Reverend Billy

We got the call from Neil Young and an email from his agent Marsha Vlasic from Independent Artists. Three weeks later we were the opening act for Neil Young and Crazy Horse, the stage at the center of a tour called Love Earth, which was invented by Neil and partner Daryl Hannah.

Our "Earthalujah!" wasn't the only statement from radical activists on this tour. In each of the 30 cities, the local earth activists were given big open-air shade structures where they could sing or table their writings, talk to people. The Village was always placed where people couldn't avoid it, between their cars and the empty seats of the amphitheater. The Love Earth Tour caravan of sound people and equipment, food and safety folks, office workers, truck and bus drivers … are streaming down highways over a five-month period. As I write we're in a pause halfway through. We begin again on July 8 in Toronto, then onward, coming to an end at the Hollywood Bowl on Sept 29.

We have interrupted our regular Sunday "Earth service'' at the Earthchxrch on Loisaida Ave in the East Village. Fifteen of us went off in two tour buses, opening in San Diego on May Day. Now for the second half of the Love Earth Tour we will rotate in new singers. The half-hour performance opening for Neil was made possible by the songs and sermons we developed over two years in our home in a converted bank building on Avenue C. The choir created a song form in which they could sing two or even three songs simultaneously in a gospel jazz idiom. My improvisations as preacher came out of this atmosphere of ecstatic improv, directed by Savitri D.

Savitri also created the script for our 29 minutes.

***SONG: "The Nowbird" — two minutes — A conversation with a bird that keeps shouting "a tree is the opposite of a cop."***

***SERMON: Two-minute preacher's welcome — the suppressed feeling of mortal danger we all have in our everyday life.***

***SONG: Three minutes — In the "The Great Outdoors" — Francisco Benitez is a punk who reappears in 2044 to confront tourists at a scenic area.***

***SONG: "Where Do I go?" is a stem-winder of a gospel song that brings down the house. The content reminds the audience of places we go to find the mystery of life when we're nine years old, "I go to the mountain, I go to the tree next door …" Based on "The Poetics of Space" by Gaston Bachelard"***

***SONG: "Beautiful Earth" — A lover of the Earth wants to make sense of all the fire and flood, "Earth won't you please translate?"***

***SERMON: Five to seven minutes. I rotated sermons, sometimes a costly error in approach, but the point was always that each of us has a radical action inside and each of us knows that to love the Earth and survive is to live by the only law that matters, but that this is mysterious law to us, as it should be. This law is unknown.***

***SONG: "I'm Filled with the Fabulous Unknown" — Two minutes — Our theme song for the past year.***

***SERMON FAREWELL: Addressing the sea of rocker fans: "You look like a movement to me!" I counsel the public to work together, stop being passive and alone, be active in new communities.***

***SONG: "You're Not The Only One" is an improvisation, the nine singers take four different phrases and riff, but it ends on a signal, abrupt climactic ending.***

***EXIT: A one-word sermon on the amazing sound system 'CHANGE!"***

*Reverend Billy is taking a break from his duties as* The Indypendent's *advice columnist. For more, see revbilly.com.*

# Free summer events & destinations

**ONE SHORT FERRY RIDE AWAY:** *The 13th annual New York City Poetry Festival will be held at Nolan Park on Governors Island on July 13 and 14.*

**THRU OCT 26 • 4PM–MIDNIGHT • FREE**
QUEENS NIGHT MARKET
The Queens Night Market is an open-air night market featuring up to 100 independent vendors selling merchandise, art, and food. The family-friendly event offers small-scale cultural performances that celebrate the rich cultural diversity and heritage of NYC and Queens. Visit queensnightmarket.com/faq for more.
*FLUSHING MEADOWS CORONA PARK*
*4701 111th St*
*QNS*

**THURSDAYS • 7–8PM • FREE**
YOGA EN MASSE: BROOKLYN FLOW AT PROSPECT PARK
Brooklyn's finest yoga teachers from different studios around the park lead free, outdoor group yoga classes in a low-pressure, beautiful environment. Bring your own mat or towel, a bottle of water and friends. Please RSVP and sign the waiver prior to your first class at brooklynflow.com/prospectparkyoga.
*PROSPECT PARK*
*Long Meadow*
*BKLYN*

**SATURDAYS • 11AM–12PM • FREE**
JUGGLING CLASS WITH THE BRYANT PARK JUGGLERS
This drop-in class welcomes all-levels to participate in a setting centered around having fun and learning basic juggling tricks. At the end of each session the Jugglers will perform a more advanced routine providing entertainment for the entire family! Supplies will be provided. Visit bryantpark.org/calendar/event/juggling-saturday/2024-07-06 for more.
*UPPER TERRACE*
*Bryant Park*
*MNHTN*

**SUN JUN 30–JUL 7 • 5PM • FREE**
VOICES OF A PEOPLE'S HISTORY POP-UP PERFORMANCE
These pop-up dramatic performances by Voices of a People's History reenact key speeches highlighting the struggles for life, liberty and happiness in the United States. Featuring Jeorge Bennett Watson on June 30 and Staceyann Chin on July 7.
*HEARST PLAZA*
*30 Lincoln Center Plaza*
*MNHTN*

**SAT JUL 6 • DOORS 6:30PM; SHOW 7:30PM • FREE**
FILM NIGHT: DO THE RIGHT THING
Join us for a BRIC Celebrate Brooklyn! movie night as we screen Spike Lee's Do The Right Thing. Celebrating its 35th anniversary, the quintessential Brooklyn tale – featuring Brooklyn's Bed-Stuy "Do or Die" neighborhood and Public Enemy's anthem-turned-battlecry "Fight the Power" – Lee's iconic film resonates just as poignantly and urgently today as it did in 1989. Before the screening, there will be a panel featuring special guests.
*LENA HORNE BANDSHELL*
*141 Prospect Park West*
*BKLYN*

**SAT JUL 6, AUG 3, SEP 7 & OCT 5 • 4PM–10PM • FREE**
BRONX NIGHT MARKET
Featuring over 40 local vendors and attracting 4,000+ guests, this vibrant hub showcases diverse cuisines, supports local businesses and contributes to the community's cultural richness and economic vibrancy.
*FORDHAM PLAZA*
*1 Fordham Plaza*
*BRNX*

**WED JUL 10–SUN JUL 14 • FREE**
INDIA WEEK! AVIMUKTA: WHERE THE SEEKER MEETS THE SACRED
Celebrating the beauty and vibrancy of Indian culture, Lincoln Center's India Week kicks off on Wednesday, July 10, at 8 p.m. at Damrosch Park with Ragamala Dance Company's Avimukta – where seven dancers undertake rituals of sacred contemplation in an ecstatic prayer celebrating life's dissolution, featuring mother/daughter soloists honoring their ancestors in a "rapturous and profound" production. Go to encr.pw/7SCH5 for the full India Week schedule.
*VARIOUS LOCATIONS*

**SAT JUL 13 & SUN JUL 14 • 11AM–6PM • FREE**
13TH ANNUAL NEW YORK CITY POETRY FESTIVAL
Every summer the New York City Poetry Festival invites poetry organizations, collectives, admirers, and practitioners of all shapes and sizes to Governors Island to listen, learn, play and rejoice in the glory of poetry. This year the festival will be headlined by Danez Smith, Franny Choi, Saeed Jones and Torrin A. Greathouse – all heavily acclaimed poets in their own rights! Visit newyorkcitypoetryfestival.com for more.
*NOLAN PARK*
*Governors Island*

**SUN JUL 14, AUG 10, SEP 14 • 2PM–8PM • FREE**
PUBLIC SERVICE DANCE PARTY
DJs from around Brooklyn come together to provide hours of free daytime entertainment for anyone and everyone. It is suggested that people must look at each other and not the DJs! (to encourage community building through dancing). Party-goers are also encouraged to come sober, hydrated and open to meeting their fellow Brooklynites!
*MARIA HERNANDEZ PARK*
*Irving & Knickerbocker avenues b/w Starr & Suydam streets*
*BKLYN*

**THU JUL 18 • 7PM • FREE**
LIZ'S BOOK BAR GRAND OPENING & AUTHOR TALK
The first author event at Liz's Book Bar will include a discussion between author Joseph Earl Thomas and Brooklyn Institute for Social Research's Paige Sweet. Thomas is known for his works on literary realism and expanding the genre beyond depicting Black suffering to be a more holistic representation of marginalized experiences.
*315 Smith Street*
*BROOKLYN*

**WED JUL 24 • 10AM–11AM • FREE**
CUMBE DANCE
This family-friendly workshop and dance exposition exposes all levels to dance and music from the African diaspora. Participants will first watch performances from professionals at the Cumbe Center for African and Diaspora Dance before learning movements and joining in.
*MONUMENT PLAZA*
*Forte Greene Park*
*BKLYN*

**WED JUL 24 • 7PM • FREE**
BRASIL SUMMERFEST: HUGO SANBONE
Hugo Sanbone, a Brazilian virtuoso multi-instrumentalist and composer, innovatively fuses jazz with Afro-Brazilian music from Salvador de Bahia. His Sanbone Pagode Orquestra and Yemanjá Project, the latter based on African-Brazilian mythology, blend classical music with contagious Bahian percussion. Brasil Summerfest will take place July 5–26. Visit brasilsummerfest.com for more.
*BROOKLYN CENTRAL PUBLIC LIBRARY*
*10 Grand Army Plaza*
*BKLYN*

**WED JUL 24 • 8:30PM–11PM • FREE**
SCREENING IN THE PARK: MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING
This is a screening of The Public Theatre's production of Shakespeare's Much Ado About Nothing, a modern retelling of the classic play about revenge, miscommunication and romance directed by Tony Award winner Kenny Leon.
nycgovparks.org/events/shakespeare
*BROOKLYN WAR MEMORIAL*
*Cadman Plaza*
*BKLYN*

**FRI AUG 2 • 6PM • FREE**
BOOK LAUNCH: BEYOND POLICING W/ PHILIP V. MCHARRIS & THENJIWE MCHARRIS
Come join us for a book launch for Beyond Policing by Philip V. McHarris, in conversation with Thenjiwe McHarris, where they reimagine a world without police and explore community-based safety models, decriminalization and crisis-response teams.
*THE PEOPLE'S FORUM*
*320 West 37th St.*
*MNHTN*

## NYC FREE SUMMER MUSEUMS!

**COOPER HEWITT, SMITHSONIAN DESIGN MUSEUM**
*Pay what you wish daily from 5–6pm.*

**EL MUSEO DEL BARRIO**
*Pay what you wish.*

**LESLIE LOHMAN MUSEUM FOR GAY AND LESBIAN ART**
*Free/suggested donation.*

**METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART**
*Pay what you wish for New York State residents, and New York, New Jersey and Connecticut students.*

**MOMA PS1**
*Pay what you wish for New York State residents.*

**MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK**
*Pay what you wish.*

**QUEENS MUSEUM**
*Free!*

**AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY**
*Pay what you wish.*